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UNITED NATIONS REFORM: MEASURES AND PROPOSALS

Establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General

Note by the Secretariat

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1. In his report of 14 July 1997 entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), the Secretary-General indicated that he would recommend to the General Assembly that the post of Deputy Secretary-General be established. In explaining why he planned to make the proposal, the Secretary-General pointed out that while the multiplicity of the roles performed by him was a major source of strength of the Office, it also limited the attention which any Secretary-General could devote to providing sustained intellectual and organizational leadership. It was also pointed out that while the very breadth of the substantive programmes of the United Nations was a great source of its potential institutional strength, the Organization was not always able to take advantage of those strengths.

2. Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Secretary-General is the chief administrative officer of the Organization. In that capacity, all senior officials in the Organization who head departments, offices, programmes, funds or other entities report directly to him. As a result, some 30 senior officials now report directly to the Secretary-General. While the establishment of Executive Committees facilitates substantive coordination among the senior officials, each continues to be administratively responsible to the Secretary-General. The span of reporting entailed by having this large number of officials reporting to the Secretary-General does not allow for the maintenance of adequate and systematic managerial oversight and supervision. The Secretary-General, therefore, requires the support of a Deputy who would assist him in the exercise of his managerial functions.

3. The nature of the responsibilities of the post of Secretary-General makes it necessary for the Secretary-General to be away from Headquarters on a regular basis. The Secretary-General must attend an array of intergovernmental and regional meetings, visit United Nations offices and missions away from Headquarters and respond to invitations from Member States to undertake official visits. Although the Secretary-General remains in close touch with Headquarters during his absence, the presence of a Deputy to act on his behalf would ensure the maintenance of the smooth and efficient functioning of the Secretariat.

4. In order to introduce a new leadership and management structure within the Secretariat, the Secretary-General has established a Senior Management Group and Executive Committees in the areas of peace and security, economic and social affairs, development cooperation and humanitarian affairs. The Executive Committees are already functioning and have begun to make a contribution to facilitating more concerted and coordinated management of the work of the Organization. There are a number of issues and concerns which cut across the work of all Executive Committees. It is important to ensure, in this context, that the economic and social roots of conflict are taken into account in the work of the Organization in the field of peace and security; that, in addressing complex emergencies, the conditions that permit the resumption of economic and social development are given special attention and are actively promoted; and that the analytical work of the Organization, guided by the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, and its development operations, under the aegis of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Development Group, are mutually supporting and lead to enhancing the overall impact of the Organization on development. The Deputy Secretary-General would have a special responsibility in taking the lead in harmonizing the actions of the Organization on such

issues. The Deputy Secretary-General would also work closely with the Secretary-General to elevate the profile and leadership of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres, including further efforts to strengthen the United Nations as a leading centre for development policy and development assistance.

5. In summary, the Deputy Secretary-General would have the following responsibilities: (a) to assist the Secretary-General in leading and managing the operations of the Secretariat; (b) to act for the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters in the absence of the Secretary-General and in other cases as may be decided by the Secretary-General; (c) to support the Secretary-General in ensuring intersectoral and inter-institutional coherence of activities and programmes that cross functional sectors; (d) to assist the Secretary-General in his efforts to heighten public awareness and increase contact with the representatives of Member States; (e) to represent the Secretary-General at conferences, official functions, ceremonial and other occasions as may be decided by the Secretary-General; and (f) to undertake such special assignments as may be determined from time to time by the Secretary-General. Initially, the Deputy Secretary-General would also be assigned the task of overseeing, on behalf of the Secretary-General, the continuing United Nations reform effort, particularly in the light of the fact that the work of the Office of the Executive Coordinator for United Nations Reform will come to an end on 31 December 1997. The Deputy Secretary-General would also be responsible for the establishment of the Office for Development Financing, and thereafter would oversee its activities.

6. In his report of 11 September 1997 (A/52/303), the Secretary-General outlined the programmatic and financial consequences of the actions and recommendations relating to the work of the Secretariat deriving from his letter to the President of the General Assembly dated 17 March 1997 (A/51/829) and his report on "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950). It is indicated in the former report that the Deputy Secretary-General would be a staff member appointed by the Secretary-General for a period not to exceed his own term of office. In terms of remuneration, it is proposed that the salary of the Deputy be set at the mid-point between that of the Secretary-General and that of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. With respect to representation allowance, it is proposed that it be set at $15,000 per year.

7. The immediate office of the Deputy Secretary-General would consist of one Director (D-2), one P-5, one personal assistant and two secretaries in the General Service category. Of these posts, one P-5 and one General Service post would be met from redeployment and the establishment of one D-2 and two General Service posts would be required. In the exercise of his/her functions, the Deputy would also draw on the staff resources available in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

8. In carrying out his/her responsibilities, the Deputy Secretary-General would derive his/her authority by delegation from the Secretary-General. It would not be necessary, therefore, for the Deputy to be elected, appointed or confirmed by the General Assembly. The Secretary-General proposes that the term of office of the Deputy would coincide with that of the Secretary-General, who

would make the appointment and who could also terminate it earlier if he so decided. The status of the Deputy Secretary-General would be second only to the Secretary-General and senior to all other programme managers. The Deputy Secretary-General would have no independent authority to report to the General Assembly, the Security Council or other legislative bodies.